

SECRET

²³
No: [8809]

Date: 31 December 1974

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[FETCH]

We attach ²..... copies of note number ²³ [615]..... of 19 December 1974
from [FETCH]
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Yours sincerely ⁰⁶
[J. J. Harrell]
[XEROX] ⁰⁶
[pp. R. Murphy] ⁰⁶

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SOURCE: [SYNEMA/1]
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NOTE NO 615 of 13 December 1974

NICOLE SZULC

1. SZULC left Havana for Madrid and London on 9 December, flying by Air Cubana at the invitation of the Cuban Government who also paid for her fare from Lima to Havana. She was of course the guest of the Cubans during the month she spent here; a car and a MINIX "chaperone" were at her constant disposal. She was, however, far from being embarrassed by these attentions and evidently considered them no more than her due since she was, in effect, working for the Cubans themselves rather than on behalf of any foreign newspaper.

2. I found SZULC inconsistent in her description of how she had covered her tracks to make sure that her Cuba visit would not come to the attention of the American authorities. The first time we met she claimed that the arrangements for her travel had been made in virtually clandestine conditions with Cuban officials accredited to the UN. She was anyway going to Brazil and therefore selected the Lima-Havana route as her way into Cuba; as she explained, the Cuban immigration authorities were briefed not to mark her passport. She hoped that by following a devious route out of Cuba she could eventually arrive in the States without arousing suspicions about where she had been in the previous two months. But, slightly contradicting this apparent concern to conceal her Cuba visit she admitted on another occasion that it was more than probable that the CIA would rumble her and indeed, they would know of her intention to come to Cuba since she had openly requested permission to travel from the State Department. Her application had been refused, which, while it did not surprise her, confirmed her view that the American authorities were determined to victimise her because of her political views: certain other categories of Americans were being allowed by the State Department to travel to Cuba.

3. It was evident from SZULC's own muddled and confused logic that she is motivated by a profound and almost vitriolic hatred of, as she put it, the US Government and its agencies. She repeatedly denigrated her US citizenship, claiming that it was the result of "an accident of birth". She insisted that in every other respect except her birth certificate she was Latin American (Brazilian) and not American. Her references to her own mother seemed also to be slightly contemptuous; clearly her strongest attachment is to her father whom she described as the only exception in "a family of fascists". The member of the family who appeared to be her pet hate was a grandfather resident in Brazil who worked for the Mercedes Benz company and had some responsibility for the production of napalm. To judge from the frequency with which she discussed her father, I should say he has been the strongest influence on her. They share much the same political viewpoint and according to SZULC it was her father's growing dislike of

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the New York Times' political position which persuaded him to resign and follow his own bent as a freelance. They both believed that a journalist should express his own "personal" views instead of those of a particular newspaper.

4. The abuse and vituperation which SEULC poured out against the US seemed as illogical and ill-founded as her unquestioning assumption that everything about the Cuban system represented the nearest that human society had come to Utopia. Her naive enthusiasm for what she was shown in Cuba, and her dogmatic endorsement of it all, excluded any possibility of her reaching an objective assessment. For example, the Foder Popular system which she visited had fired her imagination and she refused to consider any of the more negative aspects which might have implied criticism of the Cuban authorities. You may care to note that she intends to publish an article on Foder Popular in Parase magazine (I would be interested to see a copy).

5. As you may know SEULC was divorced (or separated) from Surart BIEROP in 1972 after only 2 years of marriage. Her husband, she said, was a case for a psychoanalyst and had needed a mother rather than a wife; SEULC still seemed to be confused and depressed over the marriage although I understand that she had taken the decision to end it herself. Her educational background seems to have been very varied; apart from the establishments mentioned in your traces she said she had attended the British school in Rio de Janeiro (at which she picked up a phoney English accent she can still assume) and Berkeley University.

6. I doubt whether the dividends from her visit were as good as she had expected. At our first encounter in the apartment of Claude REGIN she made extravagant claims about her mission which she interpreted as being to assist the Cubans in uncovering information on CIA intelligence activity on the island and to penetrate the foreign and diplomatic community for this purpose. (It may seem remarkable that she should have been so indiscreet: but I think the explanation lies primarily in her naivete and ready assumption of a sympathetic audience, in a desire to impress and a loquacity induced either by alcohol or possibly by drugs of some kind.) It never seemed to occur to her for a moment that in talking so openly about the purpose of her visit she was in effect blowing herself. However, unless she learned greater discretion during the four weeks she was here it would appear unlikely that she came anywhere near realising her intentions. When we met on 3 December she told me spontaneously (after several stiff rum collins') that although she had at last succeeded in making contact with Cuban intelligence officers they were young and inexperienced and were not at a high enough level for the discussions

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she wished to have. She complained that she had spent too much time with MINRAK officials who had no real idea of the main purpose of the visit and it had taken about two weeks to get through to a person with the appropriate responsibilities. Now that she was in touch with this individual she had asked for a meeting with Manuel PINEIRO. (I do not know whether she saw PINEIRO before she left, but I think it is unlikely). Up to that point SEULC had passed the Cubans "useful" material on CIA operations (mainly in Latin America) but had received very little in return. She was rather distressed by this lack of reciprocity, pointing out to me that she was after all on the Cubans' side and was offering them the opportunity to embarrass the Americans by publication of damaging material. However, judging from her euphoria when I saw her very briefly on 7 December she may perhaps have received something further from the Cubans.

7. In any case, it seems she may have been less active on the intelligence front than she had expected and as far as I know she had little or no contact with members of the diplomatic community. Much of her time was spent outside Havana visiting the provinces and in particular Matanzas where she was allowed a detailed look at Poder Popular.

8. SEULC intends to come back to Cuba in 1975 for the first Congress of the Cuban Communist Party.